

As you know, the Iranian issue hasn't even gone up to the Security Council yet. And so there's more diplomacy, in my judgment, to be done. And we'll work very closely with our European friends and other nations. As I mentioned before, we're an active member of the IAEA board, which will give us an opportunity to continue to say to the Iranians, "You've got to be transparent with your program and adhere to protocols that you have signed."

Remember, this all started when they—we found them enriching uranium in an undeclared fashion. And it happened because somebody told on them. There was an Iranian group that brought forth the information, and it was clear that they were enriching. And yet, they hadn't told anybody, which leads you to wonder why they hadn't told anybody. And so you can understand our suspicions.

And we'll work with nations. And in terms of Korea—North Korea, again, it's not Iraq. It's a different situation. But I'm—I remember being with Jiang Zemin in Crawford, and as a result of that meeting, we issued a joint declaration that said that the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear-weapons-free. Since then I've—that policy has been confirmed by President Hu Jintao. And the other day the leader of North Korea declared they had a nuclear weapon, which obviously means that if he is—if he's correct, that the peninsula is not nuclear-weapons-free. So now is the time for us to work with friends and allies who have agreed to be a part of the process to determine what we're jointly going to do about it. And that's where we are in the process right now.

Thank you all very much for your attention and questions. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon, who was assassinated on February 14 in Beirut; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia; National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley; former President Jiang Zemin of China; President Hu Jintao of China; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea. The Office of the Press Secretary also re-

leased a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005

February 17, 2005

I commend the House for passing a class-action reform bill that will help protect people who are wrongfully harmed while reducing the frivolous lawsuits that clog our courts, hurt the economy, cost jobs, and burden American businesses. Junk lawsuits have helped drive the cost of America's tort system to more than \$240 billion a year, greater than any other major industrialized nation. This bill is an important step forward in our efforts to reform the litigation system and to continue creating jobs and growing our economy. I look forward to signing the bill into law.

Statement on the Resignation of N. Gregory Mankiw as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers

February 17, 2005

Greg Mankiw has been a trusted member of my economic team and a close adviser. His wise and principled counsel over the past 2 years has helped shape policies that today are fueling our economic growth. I am grateful to Greg for his service to our country, and I wish him, Deborah, and the Mankiw family all the best.

Interview With TV3-France

February 18, 2005

France-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much to welcome Francois. You and President Chirac want to improve your relationship after bitter divisions on Iraq. How do you plan, yourself, to take concrete steps with France, with the allies, and restore credible cooperation on the hardest issues, like Middle East for instance?

The President. Sure. No, I think that's a great question because inherent in your